

Regional Council Activity Report

May 3, 2000



Briefing to Member Agencies from Executive Director James M. Bourey

Executive Director's Report

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has long recognized the indivisible links between the planning areas of land use, transportation and air quality, as each impacts the other in countless ways. With our population expected to double in the next 25-30 years, we will see effects on land use, transportation, housing, air quality, water use and infrastructure costs. Without careful planning, these impacts may threaten the economic vitality of this region. It is imperative that we put regional strategies in place that balance adequate development with the protection of open space and our native environments.

Now, thanks to a \$295,000 grant awarded to MAG under the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP), building these sustainable communities will be a little easier. The Growing Smarter Plus bill signed into law in February 1999 includes a provision for cities and towns to coordinate their planning efforts. The TCSP grant will help MAG assist member agencies with implementing the planning requirements for growing smarter and create an integrated approach to smart growth planning at the regional level.

The MAG region has some of the best-run cities and towns in the world, which are now simultaneously updating their General Plans to comply with the Growing Smarter Act. Through the TCSP project, MAG can provide analysis to facilitate transportation, infrastructure and open space investment decisions. The plan will have four primary goals:

- To enhance regional planning efforts by collaborating with local governments regarding latest development plans.
- To encourage an integrated regional approach to meet the growing smarter legislation and in planning for future growth.
- To assist local governments in creating strategies to support adequate infrastructure development and open space.
- To create a framework to assist member agencies in transportation, infrastructure and open space investment decisions.

With the completion of the 2000 Decennial Census, the updating of local land use plans for growing smarter and the development of key regional plans, our region has an excellent opportunity to collaborate in developing a blueprint for the future. The TCSP grant provides an opportunity to integrate local plans into a cohesive regional program. To quote author Ken Blanchard: "No one is as smart as all of us." This grant and planning effort provides an opportunity for all of us to make the smartest choices for the future.



Regional Council Meeting Report for April 26, 2000

Council Approves Two Projects for Squaw Peak Freeway

The MAG Regional Council approved a request by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to extend noise walls along State Route 51 between Sweetwater and Greenway Roads. ADOT said the project is needed to mitigate the noise levels along that section in order to meet the federal noise standard. The Council unanimously approved the request.

In a separate request, the City of Phoenix requested that the segment of State Route 51 connecting Union Hills to the Pima Freeway interchange be accelerated, so that it is completed at the same time as the Bell Road to Union Hills project. Phoenix has applied for a loan from the Highway Expansion and Extension Loan Program (HELP) to provide the necessary financing for the project. The segment was originally planned to be completed in June 2005. Under the new request — unanimously approved by the Council — the scheduled completion date is December 2003.

For more information contact Eric Anderson, MAG Freeway Program Manager, (602) 470-1107.

Council Delays Action on Open Space Issues

The MAG Regional Council voted to postpone its decision on two agenda items involving regional development — the Desert Spaces Plan Implementation Task Force Final Report and the Environmentally Sensitive Development Areas Policies and Design Guidelines. The Council agreed to delay consideration of the two issues for 30 days, in order to give development and homebuilding representatives more time to provide comments on the plans. Both issues will be considered at the next Regional Council meeting on May 24, 2000.

For more information contact Corey Cox, MAG Regional Development Manager, (602) 254-6300.



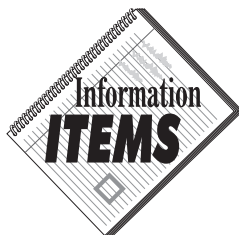
Upcoming Issues

Elimination of Smog Dogs Could Impact CO Plan

On April 28, Governor Jane Hull signed a bill into law that ends the Valley's "Smog Dog" program. House Bill 2104 repeals the statute that created the roadside emissions inspection program. The program is part of Arizona's vehicle inspection and maintenance (I/M) program. It involves the use of remote sensors often called "Smog Dogs" for their ability to "sniff" the air for dirty tailpipe emissions. The sensors are contained in roadside vans that are placed on freeway ramps to read the exhaust of passing vehicles and identify polluting cars.

There is concern among MAG and other clean air advocates that elimination of the program may impact the Valley's ability to meet federal standards for carbon-monoxide pollution, and jeopardize approval of MAG's Serious Area Carbon Monoxide Plan. The Valley has gone nearly three straight years with no carbon monoxide violations. The EPA has until September 9, 2000 to approve the MAG carbon monoxide plan.

For more information contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Manager, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

Clean Fuels Forum A Success

Whether attracted by the tax incentives that cut a vehicle's cost by up to 75 percent, or simply by the good feeling that comes with cleaning up the Valley's air, about 200 participants turned out April 25 for "Arizona Alternatives: Clean Fuels for Clean Cities." Sponsored by MAG, the first-ever statewide fuels forum was designed to promote, celebrate and showcase alternative fuel programs. The conference featured events and discussions aimed at alternative fuel providers, fleet managers, Clean Cities stakeholders and other decision makers. Information booths and displays were open to the public in an effort to inform motorists about alternative fuels and how they can be used.

The most popular display featured a 'ride and drive' where participants could drive or be driven in a number of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles. The clean cars ranged from a hydrogen Geo to bi-fuel pickup trucks to a hybrid electric Toyota Prius and Honda Civic. There was even a retrofitted electric Porsche brought in by students from Shadow Mountain High School.

The purpose of the forum was to demonstrate that owning and driving an alternative fuel vehicle is not much different from owning any other vehicle in terms of appearance, handling and performance. Instead, the difference lies in the cleaner emissions that come out of the tailpipe, which can be critical to cleaner air. **For more information contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Manager, or Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**



Upcoming Events

Judges Selected for Desert Peaks Awards

A distinguished panel of judges from across the region has been assigned the difficult task of selecting recipients of the Third Annual Desert Peaks Awards. The judges, who represent a diverse cross section of interests and experience, were selected for their insight and knowledge of regional issues. The seven member panel includes: Sandy Black, Community Relations Manager at Intel Corporation; Alfredo Gutierrez, President of Jamieson and Gutierrez and former state senator; the Honorable Jeff Hatch-Miller, State Representative; Ginny Hildebrand, Executive Director of the Association of Arizona Food Banks and 1999 Desert Peaks Award recipient; Pam Johnson, Senior Vice President and Executive Editor of the Arizona Republic; Ray Kellis, former Peoria School Superintendent; and Kathryn Lincoln, President of Lincoln Foundation, Incorporated.

This year 45 nominations were received for the five award categories of Public Partnership, Public Private Partnership, Distinguished Service, Regional Partnership and Regional Excellence.

The Desert Peaks Awards program will be held at the Phoenix Airport Marriott Hotel on Wednesday, June 21, 2000. The awards ceremony will follow the MAG Annual Meeting, which begins at 5:00 p.m. at the same location. A reception will be held from 5:30-6:15 p.m., with the dinner and awards ceremony taking place from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Highlights of this year's event will include a State of the Region address by current MAG Chairman Neil Giuliano and a look at the challenges ahead for the region by MAG Vice Chairman Skip Rimsza.

The cost is \$40 per ticket for reservations and payments received before June 6, 2000. Reservations received after the deadline will be made on a space available basis.

For more information contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 24, 2000 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Ave., Suite 200. Agenda items will include the Desert Spaces Implementation Task Force and Environmentally Sensitive Development Standards, which were carried forward from the April 26, 2000 Regional Council meeting. Additional agenda items will include a requested change to increase the project budget for the Pecos Road connection for the Santan/I-10 Traffic Interchange; consideration of the Interim Close-out and Amendment to the FY 2000-2004 MAG Transportation Improvement Program; N-1-1 (specially designated three digit dialing codes) Telephone Service recommendations; the Incarceration of Municipal Prisoners Working Group Interim Report; the Homeless Continuum of Care Recommendations; and adoption of the FY 2001 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget.

For more information contact Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.